



**UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

Meeting with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Regarding Incidental Take of  
Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles at Salem Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1 and 2

August 5, 2021

**TELECONFERENCE DATE**

July 20, 2021

**PARTICIPANTS**

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)

Briana Arlene, Conservation Biologist & ESA Consultation Coordinator

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

Julie Crocker, Endangered Fish Recovery Branch Chief  
Jolvan Morris, Marine Resources Management Specialist  
Kate Sampson, Sea Turtle Stranding and Disentanglement Coordinator

PSEG Nuclear, LLC (PSEG)

Kenneth Strait, Biological Programs Manager  
David Mannai, Senior Director Regulatory Operations and Nuclear Oversight

**BACKGROUND**

- Between June 17, 2021, and July 8, 2021, PSEG personnel collected six dead Kemp's ridley sea turtles from the Salem trash rakes during raking activities.
- This exceeds the allowable take of Kemp's ridley sea turtles set forth in the NMFS's 2014 biological opinion.
- The teleconference was scheduled to discuss these incidental takes.

**MEETING NOTES**

- PSEG described the incidental take events. Of the six Kemp's ridley sea turtles collected, three were decomposed and in a condition indicating that death was unlikely to have been related to plant operation. The remaining three individuals were fresh dead. One exhibited lacerations, and two had no obvious signs of injury.
- PSEG sent the three fresh dead individuals to the Marine Mammal Stranding Center (MMSC) for necropsy analysis. PSEG is not aware of the timeline for receiving necropsy results.
- Prior to these events, PSEG had collected only four Kemp's ridley sea turtles since NMFS issued the 2014 biological opinion. All four of these individuals were in a decomposed state indicative of previous death.
- PSEG has not changed its raking practices or made any other changes to plant operations. PSEG rakes once per week in the summer months because there is typically not a lot of debris at this time of the year.

- PSEG stated that temperature and salinity measurements near the plant have been within the normal seasonal ranges.
- NMFS noted that its stranding partners have reported nothing unusual (e.g., unusual species' distributions, high population numbers, etc.) that would potentially explain the higher numbers of Kemp's ridley incidental takes at Salem.
- NMFS has observed an increasing trend in cold-stunned turtles in Massachusetts and New York. However, this trend is more likely correlated with a shift in the species' northern range than with an overall population increase and would not inform the take events at Salem.
- NMFS noted that strong onshore winds could have pushed previously dead sea turtle carcasses onshore. While this might have contributed to the three decomposed individuals, it would not explain the three fresh dead individuals.
- Participants discussed PSEG's coordination and agreements with the MMSC. Although there is no formal written agreement, PSEG provides an annual letter to the MMSC that states PSEG's intent to continue to coordinate with the MMSC concerning sea turtle takes. PSEG also provides funding to the MMSC.
- MMSC works with the New Jersey State Department of Agriculture, Animal Health Diagnostic Lab to arrange for necropsy by New Jersey's veterinary pathologist on any dead sea turtles recovered at Salem. NMFS noted that sea turtle necropsy is likely a low priority for the State Lab.
- Participants discussed potentially pursuing a more formal understanding with the MMSC as well as other options that might facilitate the MMSC's support given their limited funding and resources.

## **FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

- PSEG will reach out to the MMSC concerning necropsy results and report back to NMFS and NRC on the anticipated timeline for receiving those results.
- NMFS will contact the State Lab to determine when it intends to complete the sea turtle necropsies.
- NMFS will coordinate with NRC concerning the consultation timeline and whether sea turtle necropsy results for the three most recent takes are necessary to complete the consultation.
- NMFS may reconsider the incidental take data cut-off date used in the BiOP in light of the recent sea turtle takes. NMFS currently includes data through the end of 2020 in its analysis. In the interim, NMFS will consider providing the draft incidental take statement (excluding the Kemp's ridley portions) to the NRC and PSEG for review.
- NRC will prepare a summary of the teleconference for the administrative record.

Docket Nos.: 50-272 and 50-311

ADAMS Accession No. ML21201A070

*NMFS and PSEG were provided an opportunity to review and comment on this meeting summary prior to its finalization.*